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RECENT EUROPEAN PUBLICATIONS.

1. Manzoni's Correspondence with Fauriel. (*Il Manzoni ed il Fauriel studiati nel loro carteggio inedito da Angelo de Gubernatis.* Rome. 1880.)

2. An Essay on the Life and Genius of Calderon. By the Archbishop of Dublin. Second edition, revised and improved. London: Macmillan & Co. 1880.

3. Miracle Plays and Sacred Dramas. A Historical Survey by Dr. Karl Hase. Translated from the German by A. W. Jackson, and edited by the Rev. W. W. Jackson. London, Trübner; and Boston, Houghton, Mifflin & Co. 1880.

4. The Purgatory of Dante Alighieri. Edited with Translations and Notes by Arthur John Butler. London: Macmillan & Co. 1880.

In a sympathetic article on Manzoni published in this REVIEW forty years ago, the writer regretted that he could not present to his readers a detailed biographical sketch of "the brightest ornament of historical romance in Italy." Such a sketch has become possible only since Manzoni's death in 1873, and anything like a complete biography is still wanting, so that, of all great names in literature, Manzoni's remains but little more than a name. Some important contributions, however, to Manzoni's biography have recently seen the light, the latest of which it is proposed to examine here briefly.

In 1805, when Manzoni was twenty, he accompanied his mother, the daughter of the distinguished juriconsult Cesare Beccaria, to Paris, and there made the acquaintance of Claude Fauriel, now chiefly remembered for his history of southern Gaul under the German conquerors, and for his works on Provençal and Early-Italian literature. This acquaintance soon ripened into friendship and led to a correspondence, which, extending from 1807 to 1828, covered the most important of the two periods into which Manzoni's life may be divided. The first closes with the publication of the *Promessi Sposi* in 1827, and contains all the creations of Manzoni's imagination; the second, ending with his death, in

1873, may be termed the period of critical study. The former is the more interesting, not only from a literary standpoint, but also from a biographical one, as during this time occurred Manzoni's first visit to Paris, his marriage, and conversion.* After Fauriel's death in 1844 his papers passed into the possession of his devoted friend Madame Mohl, the wife of the distinguished Orientalist. It was her intention to publish a biography of Fauriel, and to that end she visited Manzoni in 1847 and requested his coöperation. This Manzoni, with his morbid shrinking from publicity, declined, as he would have been obliged necessarily to speak much of himself in speaking of his friend, and he was equally unwilling to accede to the publication of his own letters. Madame Mohl retained them then, permitting only Sainte-Beuve to use them for his sketch of Fauriel, which was for a long time the only source of information concerning Manzoni's stay at Paris—an event of great importance for his future.† After this, the letters remained in obscurity until the possessor permitted Professor De Gubernatis to publish them in the work before us, and deposited the originals in the Ambrosian Library at Milan.

The letters, written in French, are fifty-four in number, and, as we have already said, are scattered over twenty-one years, during which Manzoni paid two visits to Paris, where he saw his friend constantly, and had the joy of welcoming him afterward to his home at Milan. Deeply as the friends loved each other, they were at best slothful correspondents, frequently allowing several years to pass in silence, and the correspondence closed for ever after Fauriel's incredible neglect to write to Manzoni on the occasion of his wife's death. The editor has filled the frequent *lacunæ* with extracts from letters directed to Fauriel by others of Manzoni's family, and thus has presented a tolerably complete picture of his domestic and literary life. It is, however, for the pleasant glimpses they afford of the former that these letters are especially valuable. From one of the earlier ones we learn that Manzoni had cherished a deep and pure passion for a young girl whom he afterward met as a married woman at Genoa, and also that there had been some talk of a match at Paris. These affairs were soon for-

* This period, from this twofold point of view, is the subject of Professor De Gubernatis's Taylorian lectures, delivered at Oxford in 1878, and published under the title *Alessandro Manzoni, Studio biografico*. Florence. 1879.

† This sketch was first published in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, May 15 and June 1, 1845, and afterward reprinted in *Portraits Contemporains*.

gotten in his love for Henriette Blondel, whom he married in 1808. She was a Protestant, and the marriage gave rise to much gossip at Milan. Manzoni says, "Would you believe that my fellow-citizens busy themselves very willingly about my marriage, and make it the subject of much talk? Ah, divine Paris! I do not know whether in visiting us (at Paris) you noticed a cobbler, a very ordinary man, who had set up his portable shop near our door. He was called *Henri Quatre*; well, I might have married at Paris, and my very honored neighbor would never have heard of it, and here many people who have never seen me busy themselves with my affairs as if they were my relatives. I confess that this annoys me, and, added to something else, makes me greatly regret Paris." The same year found the newly-wedded couple in Paris, and there Madame Manzoni became a Roman Catholic. Manzoni's biographers tell us that, affected by his wife's conversion, he happened one day to enter the church of St. Roch, and, like St. Augustine, exclaiming, "O God, if thou exist, reveal thyself to me!" departed a believer and a Catholic. In a letter written soon after their return to Milan in 1810, he says: "As for me, I shall always follow the pleasant habit of talking to you of what interests me, at the risk of tiring you. I shall tell you then, first of all, that I have employed myself with the most important object in following the religious ideas that God sent me at Paris, and, in proportion as I advance, my heart has been always more contented and my mind more satisfied. You will indeed permit me, dear Fauriel, to hope that you, too, will occupy yourself with this. It is true that I fear for you those terrible words, *Abscondisti hæc a sapientibus et prudentibus, et revelasti ea parvulis*; but no, I do not fear them, for the goodness and humility of your heart are not inferior to your intellect or your learning. Pardon the sermon which the *parvulus* takes the liberty of preaching to you." Fauriel's answer to this letter is lost, but he remained a stoic, and Manzoni does not again mention the subject.

The years which passed were, with the exception of Manzoni's health, happy, uneventful ones. His life was spent in the winter at Milan, in the summer at his villa in Brusuglio, where he busied himself with agriculture, sending to Fauriel for books upon the subject, and for seeds and plants. His family increased rapidly, the first-born being named from Fauriel, Juliet Claudine, and the letters are full of domestic details which show how close the friendship must have been. Manzoni's health was far from good, and his nervous

attacks are an important element in his life. He could work but a short time and at long intervals only, and experienced, as he says in one of his later letters, "an inexpressible desire, not only to enjoy, but to behold tranquillity." Some interesting letters are devoted to the two plays, *Il Conte di Carmagnola* and *Adelchi*, which Fauriel translated into French. In these letters the frequent reference to the censorship, and requests to send books and letters through a third person, explain clearly enough why all political allusions are banished from the correspondence.

In a letter written in 1822 we find the first mention of his great novel, *I Promessi Sposi*, on which he had already been at work for several years. In this letter occurs a notable passage, which we leave untranslated, as a specimen of Manzoni's French style. He is still speaking of his novel: "Quant à la marche des événements, et à l'intrigue, je crois que la meilleur moyen de ne pas faire comme les autres, est de s'attacher à considérer dans la réalité la manière d'agir des hommes, et de la considérer surtout dans ce qu'elle a d'opposé à l'esprit romanesque. Dans tous les romans que j'ai lus, il me semble de voir un travail pour établir des rapports intéressants et inattendus entre les différents personnages, pour les ramener sur le scène de compagnie, pour trouver des événements qui influent à la fois et en différentes manières sur la destinée de tous, enfin une unité artificielle que l'on ne trouve pas dans la vie réelle." The readers of the *Promessi Sposi* will remember in what a remarkably natural way the unity of that work is produced.

In leaving the correspondence which our space permits us to notice very inadequately, we can only say that it shows Manzoni to be one of those rare characters which grow on acquaintance. He had early laid down for himself (in his poem "On the Death of Carlo Imbonati") a scheme of life remarkable indeed for a youth of twenty-one, and his Christian faith enabled him to persevere to the end, in spite of the bitter trials which he was called upon to undergo. The lines referred to are:

". . . di poco
 Esser contento: dalla meta mai
 Non torcer gli occhi: conservar la mano
 Pura e la mente: delle umane cose
 Tanto sperimentar, quanto ti basti
 Per non curarle: non ti far mai servo:
 Non far tregua coi vili: il santo Vero
 Mai non trader: nè proferir mai verbo,
 Che plauda al vizio, o la virtù derida."

Calderon's reputation is a curious example of one that has descended from generation to generation by the mere force of momentum, so to speak ; and just as the impulse was growing weak the Romantic School arose to glorify a poet whose undoubted talents had defended and exalted the dogmas of the Romish Church. As Archbishop Trench says, "There are few poets who have been so differently judged, who have been set so high, and set so low, as Calderon." The Schlegels put him by the side of Shakespeare, while Sismondi denounced him as the poet of the Inquisition. The extravagant laudations of the German critics have, however, made Calderon better known in Germany than elsewhere, and his noble play, "Life's a Dream," still holds the stage there. In England and America the interest in the Spanish dramatist is chiefly due to the first edition of Archbishop (then Dean) Trench's essay published twenty-four years ago, and which was deemed of sufficient interest to reprint in this country. This edition has long been out of print, both in England and here, and we welcome with pleasure this little volume, which contains a sympathetic appreciation of Calderon, free from exaggeration and disparagement. This edition has been brought up to the present time by references to late works and articles in the various periodicals, the number of which shows, we think, a greater interest in Calderon than the Archbishop admits. The translations from "Life's a Dream" and the *auto*, "The Great Theatre of the World," are perhaps the most successful that have appeared in English. With this essay and the volume on Calderon by Miss Hasell, in the "Series of Foreign Classics for English Readers," in his hands, the reader who is unacquainted with Spanish will still be able to judge which opinion is the more correct—that which makes Calderon the equal of Shakespeare, or that which degrades him into a clever playwright. Whatever opinion may be held as to his secular plays, but one, we fancy, can be formed of his sacred plays, the *autos sacramentales*, on which he lavished all the wealth of his poetic vein, and which alone of all his works he deemed worthy of his care in publication. These one-act plays were intended for performance on Corpus Christi day, their object being to exalt the dogma of transubstantiation.

These plays, whose rare poetic beauty and wonderful ingenuity can not be denied, are the complete and final development of the mediæval mysteries (or rather the moralities) which form the subject of Dr. Hase's work, in which a chapter is devoted to the "Revival of the Sacred Drama in Spain." The interest felt of late years

in the origin of the modern drama has been increased by the Oberammergau Passion Play, which, although modern in its present form, is thoroughly mediæval in its spirit and sources. Except the Basque and Italian peasant plays, which are comparatively rude and unimportant, the Oberammergau play is now the sole connecting link between the modern drama, which has become purely secular, and its ecclesiastical origin. Few of its spectators realize the interesting position it occupies as a case of mediæval survival. It was to afford the general reader a concise and entertaining account of the origin and development of the sacred drama that the present translation of Dr. Hase's lectures (*Das geistliche Schauspiel*, Leipzig, 1858) was made. The original work took no notice of the English mysteries and moralities, and the editor of the present translation has supplied this want in the notes, and has given some account of the recent performances of the Oberammergau play. The chief faults of the book may be inferred from the date of the original. In the last twenty years considerable light has been thrown on the liturgical drama, and many important works have appeared, with which the editor is not acquainted. The title is also misleading, as the miracle plays, or mysteries, occupy but one chapter, and that, in many respects, the least satisfactory in the book. With these restrictions we can cordially recommend the work as instructive and interesting. After an account of the birth of the mediæval drama from the ceremonies of the Church, the author traces its development until it loses its religious character in the modern secular theatre. The vitality of the religious drama has been very great; the Spanish *autos* were represented until suppressed by the state in 1765, while the rude plays of the Italian and Basque peasants and the Oberammergau play still flourish; and even when the sacred play lost its independent character it left its traces on the secular drama.

The transition from the mysteries of the middle ages to Dante's "Divine Comedy" is less abrupt than it may seem. Both had in view the same moral end, and enforced their teachings by a direct appeal to the horrors of hell and the joys of paradise. It is to be feared that the average Dante reader does not push his way beyond the first division of the great poem. This is to be regretted, not merely on æsthetic grounds, but because, from an ethical standpoint, the "Purgatory" is the complement of the "Inferno," and, moreover, is absolutely necessary for a correct understanding of the poet's life and greatest work. Beatrice's reproof of Dante

(Purg. xxx-xxxix) is of more value for the personal element of the poem than volumes of comments. The reasons which put the "Paradise" beyond most readers are clear enough, but it is not easy to see why the "Purgatory" is so generally neglected. Some of Dante's most touching and beautiful poetry is found in it, and, although such episodes as those of Francesca and Ugolino are wanting, we have the tender meeting of Dante and Casella, the tragedy of Pia de' Tolomei condensed into four lines, and many other equally impressive passages. Any help, then, to the study and popularization of the "Purgatory" is welcome, and none could be better fitted for this purpose than Mr. Butler's work, which is a book for both the scholar and general reader. Mr. Butler follows the plan adopted by Dr. Carlyle in his admirable edition of the "Inferno," and gives a carefully edited text, a literal prose translation, and scholarly notes. In addition to this there are two appendices, one on the dreams of cantos ix, xiv, and xxvii, the other on the allegory of cantos xxix-xxxiii, and a glossary of words "interesting either from their obscure derivation, or from some peculiarity in their use, or else as being specially illustrative of some principle of Romance etymology." The translation is generally good, but at times is obscure from its literalness, and a glance at the text is needed to make it intelligible. Besides the best editions of the text, the editor has consulted a MS. belonging to the University of Cambridge, and his changes are usually judicious. An index of proper names should be added in another edition. We trust that Mr. Butler will receive sufficient encouragement to continue his work, and prepare a similar volume on the "Paradise."

T. F. CRANE.